

BUNTER'S BREXIT

By Paul Templeman and John Daw

Chapter One

Cameras had been focussed on the empty podium for twenty-two minutes. Commentators made lame excuses in more than 20 languages and researchers hunted for obscure statistics to share about past Prime Ministers. Rain threatened. The press muttered and adjusted exposures and tripods. William George Bunter, newly elected Conservative Prime Minister of the United Kingdom was late for the speech that was to mark the pinnacle of his career. The world held its breath.

When at last a familiar fat figure emerged from the door of Number 10, it was with a diffident grin. His hair was newly ruffled, and there would afterwards be speculation by the press about the stains in the crotch of his suit. But there he was, as he always knew he would be..

'Now listen up you chaps!' He said, taking the podium.

'Well crikey, who'd have though it? I've just been to see Her Majesty the Queen who's invited me to form a government and I've.. well, of course I've been minded to accept. Who wouldn't be so minded?

'So, here's the bit where I pay tribute to the unrecognised but quite exceptional talents of my predecessor, and her debatable sense of public service. A woman, you remember. Of course, if there were any justice, she would never have been given the job in the first place.

'My view - the nation's view – she made a bit of a hash of it. Easy to say in retrospect. But naysayers since 2016 here and abroad seem to share her view that we can't honour.. well, a basic democratic mandate. So here I am today to tell you - the British people - that those critics are wrong. I can honour it and I'll jolly well deliver it. I'll show you. And them.

'And all those blinkering, blathering, burbling bandersnatch – they're about to choke on their tuck. Just you watch.

'The people who bet against Britain – they're going to lose their shirts because we're coming out of the EU on October 31 - no ifs or buts. And we'll do a new deal. A better deal. And we'll go out there into the wider world and find new chums all over the world to trade with.. lots and lots of countries, many of which I've personally visited, and some of which I've never heard. But that doesn't matter.

'Remember, I have a record. A record of success. And when Londoners called upon me to rescue their city from the destitution and despair caused by marxism, I stepped up and transformed that place of dark satanic mills to the modern, thriving metropolis you see today. The most successful city in the world, with more police officers, more hospitals, less crime and less sick people than any place on earth. They said it wasn't possible.

'So, in 99 days' time exactly we'll have cracked it. That's all I ask of you: 99 days. Put it in your diary if you have one. Set your watches. Together we'll get Brexit done!

'The Queen, whom I have just met, and whom I found to be happy, glorious, and not to say a victorious lady, has honoured me with this extraordinary office of state. But I want you to know that since my days at Greyfriars and Oxford I've always known this moment would come. The success of this country will be played out on the playing fields of Greyfriars. Its future has been debated and concluded in the cloisters of Oxford.

'From today I'm going to appoint a new government. A better one. A world-beating government. I have a chum from Greyfriars who went to work in a bank after Oxford, and he'll make a most excellent chancellor. I have other talented chums. It will be a government of all the talents - the very best of Greyfriars's scholars. And others.

'We start recruiting forthwith.

'In the future there'll be no need to visit the tuckshop – I intend to bring the tuck to the nation.

'And I'll tell you something else about my job.

'It's to be Prime Minister of the whole United Kingdom - and that means all of you out there in places I've never heard of - even if you don't have a penny to your name. Even if you're not white. Even if you're not heterosexual. I will be your Prime Minister. The chosen one. The one that will give you what every one of you told us you wanted: Brexit.

'We'll come out of the EU on October 31, Just like I said we would. No ifs. No buts. It's my promise to you as a gentleman. And what's more, as your Prime Minister.

'Because in the end Brexit was a fundamental decision by the British people. It was your choice. People wanted their laws made by people that they can elect and they can remove from office, and I'm it. Or at least I'm one of them. And we must now respect that decision.

'My old form at Greyfriars was called the Remove. I was nicknamed the Owl of the Remove, because I was wise and thoughtful. Now I like to think of myself as Head Remover – as we remove ourselves from the manacles of EU bureaucracy.

'We'll create a new partnership with our European friends – as warm and as close and as affectionate as possible, in the spirit of Churchill.

'And the first step is to get shot of all the EU nationals who are here already. And I say to them – thank you for your contribution to our society. Thanks – but no thanks. We don't need Johnny Foreigner making and mending things we don't want made or mended.

'Under this government you'll get the absolute certainty of the rights to leave as quickly as you want. And we'll help you with that. We'll support you.

'Next, I say to our friends in Ireland, and in Brussels and around the EU, I'm convinced we can do a deal without checks at the Irish border, because we refuse under any circumstances to have such checks. We'll cobble together some kind of deal between us, and we may need to sort out all the details later. And if not – if you are ever asked for paperwork to cross that border – call me. Call your

Prime Minister. And I'll tell them what to do with their paperwork. Because I won't have it. I. Won't. Have. It. Because we're British. And Britons shall not ever be slaves.

'We may even build a bridge to Ireland as a showcase of British engineering. Like the garden bridge I built in London - plush with the indigenous flora and fauna of our nation. Except that this one will be much bigger and without the plants.

'Even so, it's vital to prepare for the minuscule possibility that Brussels will begrudge us our rightful freedom and we're forced to come out with no deal. We'll still have that 39 billion quid. Which buys a lot of tuck, I can tell you.

'And we'll be prepared for that day, just like boy scouts.

'The ports will be ready and the banks will be ready and the factories will be ready and businesses will be ready and the hospitals will be ready and our amazing food and farming sector will be ready and waiting to continue selling ever more, not just here but around the world.

'I'm not going to pretend that everything is going to be plain sailing. But we'll fight them on the beaches. In the tradition of Empire. Because we're British and we will overcome.

'So, beware: Never underestimate our powers of organisation and our determination, like the Germans did in 1939. And the Argentinians.

'I will lead this country to recover our natural and historic role as an enterprising, outward-looking and truly global Britain, generous in temper and engaged with the world.

'No one in the last few centuries has succeeded in betting against the pluck and nerve and ambition of this country. And they're not going to start now.

'I'm going to work flat out to give this country the leadership it deserves. Except at weekends and when I'm at Chequers. Even if it makes me sick. I'm jolly well starting right now.

'And I'm reminded of our school motto 'Conamur Tenues Grandia':
'Though slight, we strive for greatness'.

'That ant CAN move that rubber tree plant!

'Thank you very much'

'Prime Minister!' Yelled the press pack. 'Mr Bunter!'

Flashes flashed and shutters wooshed. Bunter waved as he disappeared
inside Number 10 without looking back.

Chapter Two

Bunter had his feet up on the desk. Bob Cherry looked unaccountably miserable.

'I see you in Health,' said Bunter.

'Good health, I trust?'

'Secretary of State for Health.'

'Seems like that might be hard work.'

'Nonsense. And there's a fortune to be made for a shrewd operator. Which you are.'

'Why?'

'Why are you a shrewd operator?'

'No. Why would you appoint me as Health Secretary?'

Bunter tapped the side of his nose. 'Because you are a person as never forgets who put him where he is.'

Cherry looked blank. 'Meaning?'

'Do I have to spell it out? The NHS is a very big pie. Ripe for slicing up. Deals to be done.'

'Is that a bow tie you're wearing, Bunter?'

Bunter preened himself, tugging at a blue and white spotted bow. 'Like it?'

'Is it a new image?'

'Indeed, old chap.'

Cherry stood up. 'I'll think about Health.'

Bunter scrambled to his feet. He was taller than Cherry by a foot, and

more than twice as wide.

'Do more than think about it. I've got to fill all these jobs by lunchtime,' complained Bunter. 'And it's very nearly 10 o'clock.'



Bunter accompanied Cherry to the door and laid a hand on his back as though to hustle him out of the room.

'The nation's health is in your hands, old chap.'

'Not yet,' said Cherry.

In the ante-room Huree Jamsset Ram Singh stood up, nodding to Cherry who rolled his eyes as he left. Bunter's secretary also stood up and Bunter noticed with approval that her skirt was shorter than yesterday.

'Is it OK to let him through, Prime Minister?'

'Of course, of course.' Bunter extended a fat hand. 'Inky! Old chap. So good to see you.'

'Bunter,' said Singh with a sour look, allowing his hand to be grasped. 'Many felicitations on your most esteemed appointment.'

Bunter beamed. 'Good show, isn't it? Come into my parlour.' Singh followed Bunter into the spacious office, where Bunter busied himself at a cocktail cabinet and slopped red wine into a glass. 'Drink, old chap? Look, they have everything. Whiskey, gin.. Not even locked up.'

'I don't..' said Singh.

'No. Of course not. You don't need to tell me about the religious privations of your tribe.'

'I mean I don't, at this time of the morning.'

Bunter established himself behind his desk and propped up his legs, knocking an important looking red box to the floor.

'Is it a bow tie you're wearing, Bunter?'

'Do you like it?'

'Superbly Churchillian.'

'Do you think so?'

'To what purpose am I summoned to your great office?'

'Well, Inky, what do you think? I have to put together a cabinet of the great and the good. And when I learned that you were an MP – well we've always been the very best of friends..'

'It is not forgotten that you remain indebted to me in the sum of 6 shillings.'

'Indeed, indeed. And it's your pecuniary wizardry that made me think of you.'

'Oh?'

Bunter gulped at his wine, swung his legs from the desk and bunched his meaty shoulders as he leaned towards Singh in a confiding manner.

'How would you like to be Chancellor?'

Singh looked less enthused that Bunter had hoped. 'Will it cost me anything?'

Bunter laughed. 'Why would it cost you anything?'

'I fondly remember my time at the Greyfriars establishment and my many dealings with the Owl of the Remove. I seem to remember at each encounter it was I that emerged the poorer.'

'Oh good gracious,' said Bunter, at once dipping into his pocket. 'How

much is six shillings in today's money? Thirty pence? I'll pay you now with interest.'

'Really, there is no needfulness.'

Bunter fumbled in his jacket. 'I insist.' He fumbled some more but his hand emerged empty. 'I'll have to owe you.'

'Really, Bunter. Don't trouble yourself.'

'Very well. So how about it? Chancellor, what?'

'I shall undertake to give it my full consideration.'

'Cherry's got Health.'

'His healthfulness was supremely evident when I saw him.'

'I mean he's agreed to be Health Secretary.'

Singh looked doubtful. 'I see.'

'So I can count on you?'

'The position of chancellor will indeed require much counting.'

As Bunter showed him to the door, he said: 'Wasn't your father a bus driver, Inky?'

'He is the proprietor and owner of East Coast Railways.'

'Knew it was something like that. You should make more of your humble origins, you know. The public like that kind of thing. Well let me know. Cabinet meeting in the morning, 8:30 sharpish. Debbie?' He summoned his secretary.

'It's Mandy, Prime Minister.'

'So sorry, Mandy. Please see Mr Singh out.'



Bunter was having enormous fun. In assembling his Cabinet he felt like he was settling old scores, as well as impressing on everyone his importance and his magnitude. Dutton was next and Mandy showed him into Bunter's office with a flourish of her manicured nails and a waft of perfume.

'Mr Thomas Dutton, Prime Minister.'

'Tom!' Exclaimed Bunter, leaping up as quickly as his bountiful frame would allow and giving Dutton an entirely unexpected bear hug. 'My old chum,' said Bunter.

Dutton flinched and allowed himself to be patted on the back by Bunter with some misgiving.

'Delighted to see you again old chap,' said Dutton without enthusiasm, narrowing his thorny eyebrows.

Bunter released him and Dutton breathed a sigh.

'Drink?'

Dutton sniffed the air. 'Can't smell anything, old boy.'

Dutton was afflicted with deafness, a trait shared by many MPs.

'Not stink. Drink. I said: would you like a drink, old man?'

'No need to shout. I'm not as deaf as you think.'

'So what's it to be?'

Dutton looked at the cocktail cabinet with lust. 'Large Scotch.'

'On the rocks?'

'Eh? What?'

'With ice?'

Dutton looked around the office, into the corners and along the

threshold. 'These old buildings.
can't keep 'em out.'

You

'Keep what out, old chap?'

'Mice. Little blighters.'

'I said ice.'

'Best thing is to lay down poison. We have poison everywhere at Dutton Hall y'know.'

Bunter handed him his drink and Dutton swallowed it in one, then held out his glass. 'Don't mind if I do. A trifle parched,' then he seated himself in front of the fireplace, in a leather armchair and seemed to nod off.

Bunter settled down opposite and tapped him on the knee.

'You can't sleep here you know.'

Dutton spluttered and shook himself awake. 'Is there a Division?'

'You're not in the House.'

'Mouse? Little blighters. Didn't I tell you to lay down poison? That's the ticket.'

'How would you like to be Justice Secretary?'

'Sorry old boy. I've got one.'

'Got what?'

'A secretary. Can't just boot her out, y'know.'

Bunter raised his voice. 'Justice Secretary. How would you like to be Justice Secretary?'

'If it's all right with you, it's all right with me. Thought justice was meant to be blind, not deaf.' He spluttered at his own joke, shook his jowls and presented

his glass again. 'Any more where this came from or should we start on the good stuff, eh?'



Bunter hitched up his trousers and surveyed the expectant faces in the ante-room. He almost didn't recognise the newly hirsute Wharton in a Wodehousian check suit. He looked at his watch. Lunch was beckoning across the hours. He pointed.

'Wharton. Foreign Secretary.'

Wharton brightened. 'Thank you, Prime Minister.'

'Think nothing of it, old chap.'

A beaky nosed woman with a Thatcher perm complained: 'Must one be a Greyfriars Old Boy to be in the Cabinet?'

Bunter pondered. The word diversity came to mind. The most diverse Cabinet in history. World-beating diversity, in fact. He liked the idea of that. 'Who might you be?'

'I am Penelope Portmanteau, Member for PontyPryd.'

'School?'

'Marlborough.'

'Culture Secretary,' decided Bunter at once.

A grey, gaunt man in round spectacles languished on a couch and seemed to exude monochrome. Bunter thought he recalled him from Oxford. He wagged a finger. 'Don't I know you?'

'Sir Oliver Tempus-Fugitson. We were at Pembroke,' he drawled, without much interest. The monochrome seemed to have seeped into the couch, which was no longer brown but grey. 'Also at Greyfriars but you were just a tadpole.'

'Secretary for the Nineteenth Century.'

'Does that even exist?' Protested a man crowned with an improbable wig

'It does now. We are going to exploit the achievements of the Victorians, and Tempus-Fugitson is the very man to do it.'

'But you can't just invent ministerial portfolios!'

Bunter raised himself up on his toes. 'Am I not the Prime Minister? Surely I can do anything I please.'

'When you put it like that,' said Johnny Bull, another Greyfriars Old Boy.

Bunter gestured at Bull 'Levelling Up Secretary,' he pronounced, the role having just occurred to him.

'What does that mean?' Said Bull

'We'll think of something, I expect. But now - to deliver on my gold-plated election pledge. Whom shall I appoint as Brexit Secretary?'

Everyone in the room became suddenly occupied with their mobile phones, reading or replying to messages. Bunter looked for a victim and found Jeremy Truscott.

'Truscott, old chap. It's you isn't it? You were in the Bounders Club at Oxford.'

'I was that.'

'As an Old Bounder you will make an excellent Brexit Secretary. You're just the man to get Brexit done.'

'But I voted Remain.'

'Even better. What the public wants to see is reformed Remainers delivering our dream.'

'More of a nightmare.'

'But you'll do it?'

Truscott considered.

'Probably a 'K' in it for you.'

'Wouldn't miss it for the world.'

'That's the spirit.'

Chapter Three

In the corridor on the way to his first Cabinet meeting, Bunter was in buoyant mood. He encountered a familiar figure, stooping and striding briskly towards him who looked up and fixed Bunter with a gimlet eye, undiminished by the last 35 years.

'Quelch!' said Bunter in alarm.

Quelch glared. '*Lord* Quelch to you, Bunter.'

'What are you doing here?'

'I Chair the Privileges Committee.'

'How did you get a peerage?'

'Services to the state, Bunter. Something about which you probably know very little.'

'Harsh, sir'

Quelch seemed to draw himself up and Bunter recoiled. A disturbing memory came to mind of Quelch, cane uplifted, face crimson with fury.

'I've followed your career closely since Greyfriars, Bunter.'

'Glad to hear it, sir. I mean ter say Lord Quelch.'

'I've got my eye on you.'

'I haven't done anything.'

'Exactly!' Barked Quelch. 'You've done precisely nothing to merit elevation to this great office.'

Bunter opened his hands to indicate he was not responsible. 'I never sought high office. But my public and the Conservative Party put me here.'

'I saw you in that TV interview.'

'Which one?'

""A nasty piece of work." That's what he called you.'

Bunter's face dropped. 'You mean that one.'

Quelch raised a bony finger in the air like he used to in class when emphasising a salient point. 'I'll be keeping an eye on you, Bunter,' and he marched away, oblivious to the civil servants and MPs making way for him.

'Oh Cripes,' thought Bunter.



The paper dart floated gently through the air, executed a spin and then slid along the boardroom table to settle directly in front of Bunter. With a grim smile, Bunter screwed it into a ball and directed it at Dutton, who appeared to be sleeping.

'Oi! I heard that. What?'

The general hubbub died away. Somebody may have farted, but it was hard to be sure in the humid sweat tinged atmosphere. Bunter, hunched halfway down the table squeezed between Singh and Mauly, called the meeting to order.

'Good morning one and all. I take uncommon delight in welcoming this new team reflecting the depth and breadth of our most glorious party. You are all part of my Cabinet for Modern Britain and together we shall embark on a momentous journey, the likes of which this country has never seen. We are all of us committed to leaving the EU on the 31 October. If not before. No if, no buts.'

There ensued a thumping on the table which roused Truscott, who at once bellowed 'Hear, hear!' before descending into an apparent slumber.

Truscott raised a hand to speak. 'But..' He began.

'Didn't you hear me, old chap? I said no if, no buts. It's *sine qua non*. Our mission is to Get Brexit Done - and I intend for this proud nation to prosper

mightily during my tenure. To prosper mightily,' he repeated to a patter of softer thumps on the table. He searched for his place in a red binder, running a finger down the page. His lips moved silently before he added: 'Indeed we will. I've invited along to this meeting my Special Advisor Gregory Kaminsky who you may remember played a key role in the campaign to rid ourselves of the shackles of EU bureaucracy. Erm, Gregory..? Would you say a few words, old boy?' Bunter waved a careless hand in the direction of a shaven headed man in a track suit sitting along the periphery of the room.

'Morning everyone.' A Northern burr that seemed to rattle the tea cups. 'The Prime Minister has asked me to help shape the nature of our departure from the EU.'

'Isn't Kaminsky a Russian name?' Said Cherry.

'I was born in Durham.'

'But your lineage - is that Russian?'

'My middle name is Edward.'

'So you're not Russian?'

'There's no question about my commitment to the prosperity of the United Kingdom.'

'I wasn't questioning your commitment..'

Bunter interrupted. 'There it is chaps. I think we can all be reassured that there's no question about Gregory's commitment, integrity or faithful endeavour when it comes to this great nation - one which I fully intend to make even greater and more prosperous, you see if I don't. And I'll hear no more about it.'

'Spasibo, Prime Minister,' said Kaminsky concealing a smirk behind a forefinger.

Sir Tempus-Fugitson's monochrome aura had drained his neighbours of colour and was extending to Kaminsky from his place at the table. 'I postulate that

I may assist Mr Kaminsky to capitalise on some of the benefits from our Victorian age that have been stifled by the inglorious European Union.'

Kaminsky grunted. 'Ruddy toffs.'

'What?'

'I said that would be really great.'

'Next item on the agenda,' said Bunter, 'Downing Street parties. You're all invited, but it's strictly BYOB.'

'Thank you Prime Minister.'

Bunter noticed the diminutive Rajmar Inuccia for the first time, just across the table. He frowned. What are you doing here, Rajmar?'

'You appointed me Home Secretary, Prime Minister.'

'Did I? Crikey. I think there may have been a misunderstanding. I think what I said was that you may make someone a secretary one day.'

'I'm an MP.'

'Good gracious. Who'd have thought it?'

'Well.. I'm here now.'

'So you are. Jolly good too! Well.. welcome to government. Now..' He shuffled his papers, but then as an afterthought looked back at Inuccia. 'Is that an actual uniform you're wearing, Rajmar?'

She shifted in her seat. 'I think it just looks that way, Prime Minister. Because it's black. And, you know, with the silver buttons.'

'Hmmm. Yes. Suits you.'

'Now.. first thing on the agenda is trade deals. My chum Donald has promised me the most spectacular US trade deal..' He scowled suddenly at an empty chair. 'Where's the Trade Secretary?'

'Lost, Prime Minister,' said Cherry.

Kaminsky tutted.

'Lost!?'

'She sent me a text,' said Cherry. 'It's her first Cabinet meeting, and Number 10 is a labyrinth if you're not used to it.'

'What did she say.'

Cherry squinted at his screen and read the text: 'Soz. Lost in corridors of power. Later.'

'Soz?'

'It means..'

'I know what it means!'

The door opened and Gloria Pendlesham sidled in. 'Sorry,' she mouthed, and took the vacant seat.

'I should jolly well hope so.'

'Idiot.' Muttered Kaminsky, almost beneath his breath but loud enough for the whole room to hear clearly.

'We were talking about America,' said Bunter.

Pendlesham brightened at once. 'I've been there.' She looked at Innucia for support. 'Disney Land,' she clarified. 'With George and the kids.'

'Enlightening as it may be to hear about Mickey Mouse, Gloria..'

'MOUSE!' thundered Dutton, suddenly alert. 'Blighters! Don't worry. Poison's the answer. I was telling watsisname..'

Singh nudged him. 'The lackfulness of mice is beyond question,' he said in a low voice.

'Only yesterday,' Bunter pronounced, 'I was on the blower to my good chum Donald. And I want you, Gloria, to hop on the Prime Ministerial jet and go and get our first trade deal signed.'

'Do we have a Prime-ministerial jet?' Said Pennlesham.

Bunter waved a dismissive hand. 'If we don't we'll jolly well charter one. Now.. To the next item. Whom did I make Health Secretary?'

Cherry spoke up. 'That'll be me. Although I haven't decided.. Can we talk about the NHS budget?'

'Budgets are Inky's remit.' Directing his thumb at Singh, who looked uncomfortable.

'Yes but specifically - about the £350 million a week we'll be saving from the EU.'

Bunter looked around the table, reading the room. 'That was, erm.. Figurative, old chap.'

'Figurative?'

'Of course. It's about figures, isn't it? Remember I studied classics not maths, old boy. I'm not to know..'

'It was on the side of your campaign bus. The Leave campaign bus.'

'You can't believe everything you read on the side of a bus. Sometimes not even the destination is truthful. D'you know, I was on a bus once..'

'But you said we sent £350 million per week to the EU..'

'Yes but not consecutively.'

'What?'

Bunter sighed with impatience. 'Not on consecutive weeks. Sometimes they would send us money. Anyway it wasn't me - it was Gregory.'

Everyone turned to Kaminsky.

'Of course it was me,' growled Kaminsky.

'And where did the figure come from?' Said Cherry.

'I made it up.'

There was a stunned silence as the Cabinet absorbed this.

'We won, didn't we?'

'Gregory has a point.' said Bunter. 'Anyway, what's done is done and I was clearly not to blame. For anything. Until just now for instance I didn't know that Gregory had made it up. Not even what the exact figure was. I most definitely was not to blame.'

Cherry shook his head in despair. 'You never were, were you? I remember that from Greyfriars.'

'Because it was true.'

'I told you all about it, you old fraud,' said Kaminsky to himself.

Bunter glared at him. 'We can't have division in the Cabinet..'

Dutton leapt to his feet. 'Division!' He bellowed. 'Division! Don't dawdle. We need to vote at once,' and he made for the door, leaning for support on the backs of chairs as he went.

Cherry tapped his temple.

'Sit down Dutton,' said Bunter.

'What's that old bean?'

'SIT!'



Bunter was bathing in the afterglow of his success. He really was living the dream. King of kings. He sipped at his red wine and slouched in the pumped up sofa. He liked Number 11. He liked its simple ambience much more than the stuffy decor at Number 10 that so reminded him of Bunter Court. He munched on a ham roll and the mustard made his head swim..

Marianne crossed her long legs and brushed back a ringlet. 'This John Lewis crap will have to go. It's hideous,' she said, surveying the room as she rested the rim of her glass of Puglio against a plump lower lip. She glared at him from across the John Lewis coffee table.

'Yes. I rather thought that too, Piglet. Detestable.'

'And don't call me Piglet in front of the staff again.'

'Sorry. Slip of the tongue, Piglet.'

She recrossed her legs. 'We'll have to redecorate. I simply can't abide it.'

'Of course, Piglet. But I'm on a Prime Minister's salary now. We can't go crazy y'know.'

'Somebody can pay for it. Anybody can pay for it. There are plenty of donors. What about Lord whatisname? He's always giving you money.'

'Dovecote?'

'That's the one.'

'I'll talk to him. But I wouldn't mention that to anyone. About the money. After all he doesn't give me money. And if he did it would be quite legitimate. I spent it on electioneering. That's if he gave me any, which he didn't.' Bunter became flustered.

'Never mind that now. There's something else.'

'Yes, Piglet,' he said, with a rising sense of foreboding.

'We'll have to get married.'

Bunter coughed up some crumbs. 'But whatever for?'

'I'm an ambitious woman, Billy. You knew that when you met me.'

'Yes, but..'

'I can't play second fiddle to you all my life.'

'You're the wife of the Prime Minister!'

'Maybe I want to be Prime Minister, one day.'

'You..?'

'You're not a young man, Billy. Look at Hilary Clinton.'

'Hilary Clinton,' he repeated slowly.

'Do you think she could have been a Presidential Candidate if she'd just been Bill's floozy?' She sipped at her wine and giggled suddenly. 'He's got the same name as you, Billy.'

'Yes. Yes he does.'

Marianne's eyes misted over. 'I want to create a Bunter dynasty,' she said.

'O lor,'" said Bunter.